



Sufi Message Volume 2, In an Eastern Rose Garden

Number 7 Faith by Hazrat Inayat Khan

2016 Autumn Ozark Sufi Camp and Retreat - Reading and Practices by Stephanie Nuria Sabato

Day 1

When the question of faith arises, the orthodox always think that it is their religion, which is being spoken of. To have faith in a religion, in the priests or clergy, in a certain dogma, ceremony, principle, or in a certain form of teaching, this is what is usually understood by the word faith. On the other hand, those who are intellectual and look at life from a different point of view say, "Faith is blind; why should we believe blindly?"

To a mystic, faith is the unique power that works through the whole of creation. He does not mean by faith a belief in a certain religion or dogma or ceremony or book or teacher; he means trust, a trust even in the absence of reason.

Many people possess this quality naturally, while others do not seem to possess it. We may think that one person has brought faith with him and another has not, because he has or has not that quality. But when we study life minutely we find that there is no soul, which does not possess faith.

How true it is as the Prophet says, "Every soul when born is a faithful follower; it is afterwards that he turns to the contrary." This really means that every soul is born on earth with a simple faith, and it is only afterwards that he doubts. If it were not so, we should never have been able to learn the language we speak. Was it not learned by faith, from infancy? When the mother says, "This is a tree", the child says "tree"; when she says, "This is water", the child calls it "water." And there are many things which the parents speak of apart from ordinary everyday matters, and the child believes them as they want him to believe. Whether the names given to the things are right or wrong, the child takes them as his guardians wish him to take them, for that is his natural tendency.

In the beginning every soul has faith. Then how is it that man loses this quality which nature has bestowed on him? He loses it by the knowledge of names and forms. As he grows he covers up his faith with the knowledge of names and forms, calling that "learning." At every step in his progress towards knowledge he

compares things and considers some things better than others, saying of one thing, "This is true", of another, "This is false", "That is what I can believe and rely upon", and "This is what I cannot believe and rely upon." The one thing he calls true, the other false; but in reality neither is true or false. It is only at the beginning of knowledge that man passes through this stage. Later, when a person has raised himself above ordinary knowledge, he arrives at a stage when he is able to say, "All that I have called true is not true, and all that I have called false is not false." He finds that whatever difference there is, is only a difference of comparison. This point of view is difficult and vague, and everybody does not perceive it.

Practice: *Ya Mu'min - Listen to pronunciation* (yaa MU'-min) "O Faithful one"
(Hazrat Inayat Khan)

- *Al-Mu'min is the one who offers to us a real faith and a trust that is free of all fear, craft, and deceit.*
- *Al-Mu'min is a divine gift that allows us to feel safety, confidence, and security in our hearts.*
- *Al-Mu'min allows human beings to have trust in God alone and not to be taken in by secondary causes, or what appear on the surface to be the causes of conditions. (Physicians of the Heart)*
 - *34 Repeat Ya Mu'min Aloud*
 - *34 Repeat Mu'min as a whisper*
 - *33 Repeat Mu'min silently on breath*

Practice: *A new hope is born in my heart by breathing thy peaceful atmosphere.*
(From the Prayer Pir by Hazrat Inayat Khan)

- *34 Repeat phrase aloud then silently breath in and out*
- *34 Repeat phrase as a whisper then silently breath in and out*
- *33 Repeat phrase silently then breath in and out*

The course of human life involves so many disappointments, so many failures, so many heartaches, that no one can avoid doubting. There is a peasant saying, "He who has once burned his tongue with hot milk tries to cool even buttermilk by blowing on it." When a man has been deceived by one person, he distrusts ten people; when he has found one person unreliable, he may perhaps consider a hundred others to be so too. After failing in one thing he suspects he will fail in a thousand things. So many things take away that natural and powerful quality which was at first present, that faith which is the secret of the whole creation, the

secret of all success that can ever be attained in life. This faith is broken by life's discouraging experiences. When confidence in others is lost, then confidence in self is lost also; and the more it is lost, the more failures one meets. A doubting person considers himself to be wise and one of simple faith to be a fool. Whoever he sees he suspects; whatever he hears he questions whether it be right or wrong. He will doubt even his friend in business, waiting for the time to come when he can trust him. But that time never comes. His very doubts create doubts in the mind of the suspected person; and often the doubts come true as the effect of the doubter's thought; or at least it creates an illusion, which for the moment shows the picture of his doubts.

If we could only develop the quality, which is called faith, about which so much is said in the scriptures, in the Bible, in the Qur'an, we should find what power it would carry. It is the secret of all success.

We are here to fulfill the purpose of our life. What is that purpose? Our desire, our inclination, which is constantly at work in our mind – that is the purpose of our life. If we are unable to fulfill that inclination, we go from this world without accomplishing our purpose.

Once man realizes that every activity and impulse that comes into his mind is really from God – from that time he feels that it must be fulfilled. If it is not fulfilled, it is man's limitation that is the cause of its hindrance; he has allowed his weakness to hinder its accomplishment. It is man's lack of faith that generally causes failures. In faith is the secret of fulfillment or non-fulfillment of every thought. There is no doubt about the fulfillment of a desire if man's faith works with it. But when one's own reason and doubt come and destroy the hope, one generally meets with failure.

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- *34 Repeat phrase aloud*
- *34 Repeat phrase as a whisper then*
- *33 Repeat phrase silently then breath in 'A new hope is born in my heart' and out 'by breathing thy peaceful atmosphere.'*

Closing Prayer

Dedication of Merit

A Gift of Love

Day 2

What an important part faith plays in life! Can there be anything equal to it? The whole of religion is faith, however much people have called the separate religions faiths. Faith itself is a religion.

Does this mean that one is to believe and trust anyone blindly? Would not that be a blind faith? Would it not be obscuring the reason, the power of discrimination between right and wrong, between possible and impossible?

But the point is that the first lesson to be learnt is to have faith in oneself. How many among us there are who have no faith in themselves! It is this very lack that makes them have no faith in others.-A person who does not believe in himself cannot believe in anybody else, and is really an unbeliever. Faith must begin within. Belief in oneself should be so strong that even if a thousand people say "no", one will say "yes." To look to others for every opinion, not trusting oneself to say whether it is day or night, is to end by not only distrusting others, but by developing a kind of insanity.

Faith means self-confidence. The secret of faith is that it can be used as a medicine. If there is anything that can be called the grace of God, it is faith and self-confidence. It is something one can neither teach nor develop; it must be in one, and one can only strengthen it by loving it, by enjoying it. It must develop by itself.

Faith is in fact a power operating all through our lives, and imparted to us from the time of our birth. This power is obscured as soon as reason is developed, which occurs during the process of acquiring the knowledge needed for merely maintaining life; and then one loses one's self-confidence as well as one's confidence in others. This is doubt, which is the greatest enemy of the soul in its progress towards self-realization. It is removed as soon as one perceives that faith is really a power from God, by which He seeks to express Himself through the individual.

Confidence is assured, not by blind belief but by careful insight into the life, which surrounds us. The higher self is then able to be like the rider on a horse, and direct all the affairs and actions of the lower self. Faith defends the innate desire of the higher self, and the more faith develops, the greater is its influence, through us, upon our whole environment. Faith breeds faith. Also, faith must

dominate the reason and direct the reason; and it will do this the more surely when we realize that every thought, desire, and impulse that comes to our heart is from God, to be accomplished for some great purpose of His own.

Sometimes a person will say, "I had great faith once, but in the course of my life I have met with people one could never trust. They deceived me, and since then I have lost faith in everybody." That person is much to be pitied; he has lost so much more than anybody else. The good quality, which was in him has been killed by unfortunate experiences. How important it is that the heart of the faithful should be kept unbroken!

In India birds are made to fight as a sport. It is called Buttase. Two birds are brought together on a table, while all stand round to see the fun. As soon as the birds see one another they attack each other. The owner of each bird thinks that his bird will win, the prize will be his. But as soon as it appears as if one bird will be beaten, its owner takes it away, saying to the other, "You have won, we will not continue the fight." This is because he wants to save his bird from being disappointed. The bird would then be without faith.

Those who have no faith in themselves, those whose faith is broken, are like the bird, which is allowed to be beaten. However strong he may become, there will always remain the impression in his mind of having been beaten; and this he cannot bear.

It is like this with the elephant too, giant animal as he is. Once he is beaten, all his strength and power go. For years he will not forget it. In spite of all that power which is within him, he will never attack another elephant. The faith that really gave him his power has all gone.

There is a Hindustani saying, "Failure and victory are both in the mind."

If there is failure it is in the mind; if there is victory it is also in the mind. As long as the mind has not failed a seeming failure may be a victory, but if the mind has failed a seeming victory becomes a failure. That great power which the mind has is nothing but the power of faith. People who have done great works have not done them because of their worldly heritage; for instances occur in which people began life without a penny, and yet have ended their lives the possessors of millions. They have had no help to encourage them in life, or to raise them in life;

they have raised their position themselves.

So we see that reason has no part in faith. People may be called fanatics because they work only by faith, their critics thinking that faith only enables them to imagine things. But there are numberless people who are thinking and reasoning all their lives, asking themselves, "Shall I do this? How can I do that? How can I overcome these obstacles? And all the time they are thinking of the hindrances, or waiting for suitable circumstances to arise, and they never do. Their whole life may be spent in the pursuit of something which reason prevents them from attaining.

It is quite otherwise with faith. When there is faith there is no thought about whether there are any means of accomplishing the desire that has entered one's mind, or whether there are no means. This does not matter when faith is there, to care for and to defend the thought, to rain upon the thought and make the plant grow and bear fruit, so that some day one may see its realization.

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Dedication of Merit

A Gift of Love

Day 3

There is a story of a Sufi who was travelling with a caravan through Arabia. Among the travellers were some who had money with them for their expenses. They came to a place where it was said that robbers were likely to be and that everybody should take care of his own purse as many caravans had been robbed in that area. This young Sufi also had some money, but he thought to himself, "I have no place to keep my money. I will find some man with whom I can leave it. To whom can I give it for safety?" He was wondering if there could be any village or habitation, but could only see a tent some distance away from where the caravan had come to a halt.

So he went and found a man sitting smoking his pipe in the tent. He went up to him and said, "I do not know you, sir, but I have heard there are robbers here and that many caravans have been robbed, and I am a poor man. I thought I should protect my money, if I could only find someone to whom I could trust it; having found this tent, I feel I should entrust it to you." He left the purse, and returned to the caravan. When he arrived he found that the caravan had been robbed, and all had lost their money. He was very glad he had escaped. They were all moaning and lamenting about their losses. He thought that he at any rate was safe. Then they described the robbers, saying how many of them had come, how many had been there.

He returned to the tent to fetch his money again. He found the same man smoking there, but he was surrounded by many men, for he proved to be the chief of the robbers. The others were all sitting there, fighting and disputing what share each should take, and the chief was helping them to divide their spoil. So the young man was afraid to go nearer; and at the same time could not help thinking how foolish he was not to have kept his money, for while he was bringing it the robbers had come, and so he would have escaped anyway. The others had lost everything, but he had fooled himself.

While he was thinking this, and was about to turn away, the chief called

out for him to be fetched. He approached the chief trembling, because he believed that now even his life was in danger. The chief said, "Why did you come here; why are you turning back?" The young man asked, "Are you not the head of the robbers? Then why should I not wish to go? What use can it be to come?" The chief answered, "Man, I received your money to keep; I did not rob you of it. You trusted me. The money is therefore in my trust. Even if I am a robber, I am not dishonest. I gain by robbery, not by breaking trust. You trusted me with your money, and your money is safe. Here it is for you to take back again." So the young man was delighted, reflecting what a good thing trust is, inasmuch as one may have faith even in a robber, for he had proved himself trustworthy.

With regard to trusting people a person may think, "Is it right to believe in anything a person says? Is it right to trust everybody? There are many people who are not worthy of trust; shall we then trust everybody in order to develop our trust?" The answer is, yes. Perhaps we will have failures, but we will only trust another person when we trust ourselves; when we have faith in ourselves then we will have faith in another. Without faith in ourselves we can never have faith in another; to have faith in another is to have faith in ourselves. It does not matter if once or twice we are disappointed; but if we are afraid of being disappointed even once in our lives, perhaps we will doubt all through life, and so there will never come a time when we will be able to trust anybody, even ourselves. There are many things that can develop our trust. Sometimes an unworthy person can become worthy of trust.

There is a story that a preacher was once speaking in a little village in India.

The peasants he was preaching to could not understand philosophy or mysticism or the great problems of life. What the preacher taught was, "Have faith in God; faith is such a great virtue", and he told them that if a person repeated the sacred word he would be able to walk on water. Everyone was delighted to hear this, saying, "What a great thing! He is always talking about this same thing." Next day an old man came and said, "Sir, I cannot understand the deep problems of life, but I was very delighted with your idea last evening." The preacher answered, "What was that?" He said, "I was very much surprised. Will you come and

dine at my home? It will be such an honor." The preacher said, "Yes, with great pleasure."

A day was appointed. When the day came, the man arrived to fetch the preacher, and they set off together. On their way there was a little river which had to be crossed. When they reached the bank, the preacher said, "Where is the boat?" "Why do you ask for a boat?" the peasant replied. "The other day you said that when you use that sacred word you can walk on the water. And I was very much astonished to find that it is so. Why take a boat when it is only necessary to say that word?" But the preacher could not do it; he was not a true teacher. So he said to the old man, "You are my teacher. I have spoken, but you have acted; and if I had had your faith I should also have been able to cross the water."

This shows us that things sometimes seem obscured, as if in a mist, as if seen through a dark glass. We fear beforehand that a thing will never come, that there will always be disappointment, failure, sorrow. Depression comes on; we begin to think the times will never alter, and the same conditions will always continue. The only remedy to clear these clouds away is to look for a better time, to hope for something better in life, to feel that every thought, desire, and impulse that comes to our heart is from Him, and that it is to be accomplished with all that power for some purpose. No circumstances in our lives, not even friends and advisors, nor our reason or our doubt should be allowed to prevent the realization of our thoughts. It is through that one thing, faith, that our thoughts are kept powerful and full of strength; it is by nothing but that one thing: faith.

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